

Program Assessment Scores Reflect Outstanding Documentation for Three Green Co. ATC Instructors



Photo (l to r):
Vickie Buckman,
Amye Toms and
Sandy Smith.

Green Co. ATC Office Technology Instructors Amye Toms and Vickie Buckman and, Accounting and Finance Technology Instructor Sandy Smith were fully prepared and documented for their 2005-06 visit – as evidenced by a 3.95 program assessment score. The hard work paid off for these dedicated teachers.

Understanding the importance of program assessment in the overall process of continuous improvement and its relationship to SACS accreditation is something every KY Tech instructor has had to learn. While some have learned quicker than others, everyone in the system understands that program assessment is here to stay.

From an historical perspective, Green Co. ATC Principal Rick Atwell chose Amye Toms as his school's representative to attend the *SACS Accreditation Continuous Improvement* training session conducted at Lake Barkley. The March 1, 2006 workshop was held for all KY Tech principals and one instructor from each ATC. It clarified the process needed to develop the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and the critical pieces of information required to support that effort.

The purpose of the training was to aid each instructor in facilitating a successful continuous improvement plan for his or her respective ATC.

Upon her return from Lake Barkley, Toms went to work – not only teaching her classes, but preparing for the program and school improvement plans and the program assessment visit they would undergo. She enlisted the help of her colleagues and spent many additional hours working beyond the normal school day to get ready.

“As a result of the Lake Barkley training, I realized the value of my program improvement plan; its overall impact on the school's improvement plan and the process for involving our feeder schools. My role as facilitator in my school was a challenge; however, I felt that a paradigm shift occurred to change the overall attitude of my co-workers towards the importance of program assessment and its relationship to SACS accreditation,” says Toms. “While the process was and is intensive, we all better understood the need for documentation in the system – starting at the program level – and that is through Program Assessment. It is the critical component that links all continuous improvement together.”



Toms believes the continuous improvement process was instrumental in helping Green Co. ATC staff develop their respective three-year program improvement plans. The ultimate result was that each instructor communicated their short and long term needs as well as pie in the sky wish lists.

“It made every one of us take a better look at the articulation of their craft advisory minutes to make sure that program improvement information was documented. The documentation streamlined what was needed to actually improve the program for the benefit of the students. As a staff, we saw each of us having similar wants and needs. Now we can develop school wide improvements that will satisfy each of us,” says Toms. “At first, the staff thought this would be a dictated process; however, they realized their input was necessary and saw that this process really worked.”

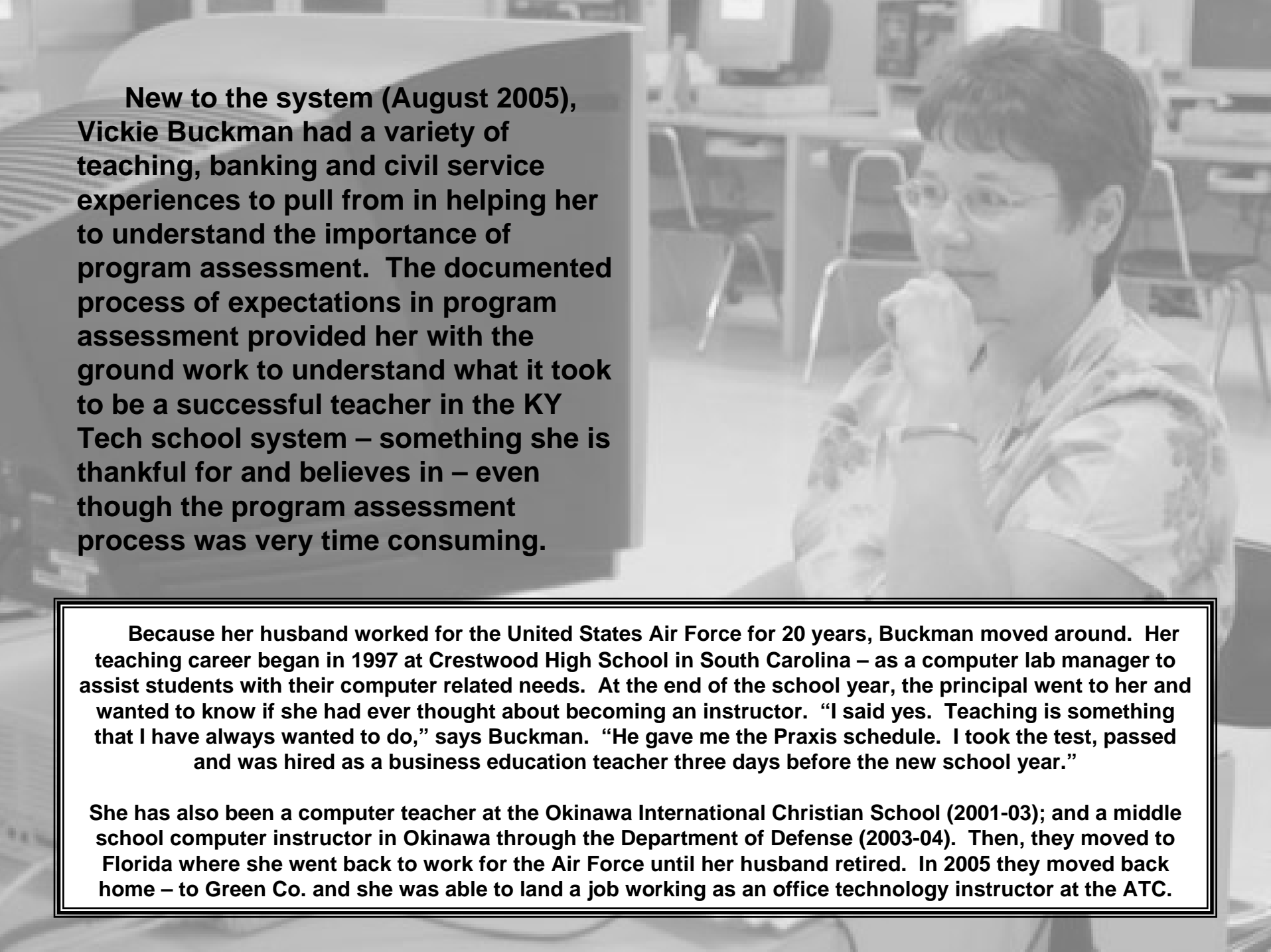
Of the program assessment process, Toms says, “After three years, I know how to collect information throughout the school year and don’t have to search for specific examples; they are already filed in the appropriate folder. Like many of my colleagues, my understanding of the process is now much better because of the training we have received (Myra Wilson and Wayne King have done an outstanding job) and in how we approach the documentation needed for a successful score. I think the program assessment process has improved the system. I’m a better teacher because I had to make sure that all the components were incorporated into my syllabus and course calendars. However, in my opinion, you still cannot measure the quality of the teacher by the score of the box because you cannot document the teacher/student relationship that affects a student’s success in life. It’s more than just teaching and testing.”





Amye Toms has been an office technology instructor at the Green Co. ATC since 1997. She began her teaching career as a business education instructor at Greenwood High School in Bowling Green during the 1990-91 school year. From there, she accepted the position of business technology instructor at the Barren Co. ATC and stayed from 1991-1997. During her 16 years in the classroom, Toms has always been a Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) advisor. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Education and a Master of Arts in Education from Western Kentucky University.

Amye L. Toms



New to the system (August 2005), Vickie Buckman had a variety of teaching, banking and civil service experiences to pull from in helping her to understand the importance of program assessment. The documented process of expectations in program assessment provided her with the ground work to understand what it took to be a successful teacher in the KY Tech school system – something she is thankful for and believes in – even though the program assessment process was very time consuming.

Because her husband worked for the United States Air Force for 20 years, Buckman moved around. Her teaching career began in 1997 at Crestwood High School in South Carolina – as a computer lab manager to assist students with their computer related needs. At the end of the school year, the principal went to her and wanted to know if she had ever thought about becoming an instructor. “I said yes. Teaching is something that I have always wanted to do,” says Buckman. “He gave me the Praxis schedule. I took the test, passed and was hired as a business education teacher three days before the new school year.”

She has also been a computer teacher at the Okinawa International Christian School (2001-03); and a middle school computer instructor in Okinawa through the Department of Defense (2003-04). Then, they moved to Florida where she went back to work for the Air Force until her husband retired. In 2005 they moved back home – to Green Co. and she was able to land a job working as an office technology instructor at the ATC.



Buckman shows Green Co. ATC Principal Rick Atwell the progress her students have made on the school's website.

“I began teaching at Green Co. ATC in August 2005 and the thought of program assessment was overwhelming; however, it’s a very similar process to what we went through in South Carolina. In my opinion, what goes in the program assessment box is what makes an effective teacher. The box is a reflection of what I am doing in the classroom everyday and the paperwork serves as my documentation,” says Buckman. “Program assessment helped me identify my role in KY Tech. It became a guideline for me to

become successful in this system. As a first year teacher, it was great to have a mentor and Amye Toms was invaluable in helping me to understand the process. I spent a lot of time at the foot of her desk. She does it the right way – by the book and I’m appreciative of her efforts for all of us.”

Vickie Buckman received a degree in Business and Computer Science in 1995 from the University of Maryland, Asian Division located in Okinawa; earned a Teaching Certificate from the South Carolina Department of Education in 2000; received her Business Teaching Certification from the Kentucky Department of Education in 2005; and completed a Master of Arts in Education, with an emphasis in Instructional Technology, University of Maryland, 2006.



The Accounting and Finance Technology programs are under the direction Sandy Smith. She has been able to bring business management strengths to the table and understands the importance of program assessment as an overall tool for professional development and program improvement.

Smith knew the program assessment process would entail a great deal of time because of the number of standards and required paperwork it takes to achieve a successful score.

“After going through the entire process the first year, I realized that in addition to all the paperwork, it causes a teacher to reflect on his or her teaching, management and organizational skills, and that’s a positive outcome. I like to reflect, learn and grow, but there are some issues that are out of a teacher’s control including equipment and scheduling,” says Smith. “I took my box home with me a whole lot in order to get it completed. The outside hours were overwhelming because I wanted to do it right. Obviously, program assessment is a year long series of documentation; however, it is also a professional growth process.”



Sandy Smith always has “Chubby” sitting on her desk. When her students have a bad day, they spend time talking to Chubby.

A childhood goal of Smith's has always been to become a teacher.

“When I first entered school, I went into business because my mother said I lacked the patience to be a good teacher. I worked in business management for 10 years before I decided to pursue teaching as a career,” says Sandy. “What I love best about teaching is learning from the students. Just being with students keeps you young, vibrant and I just love the kids.”

The “Wall of Fame” in Smith's room is where she displays photos of her senior students.



Sandy Smith has an Associate Degree in Business Administration from Lindsay Wilson College; Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Western Kentucky University (WKU); a Distributive Education Endorsement from the University of Kentucky; Teaching Certificate from WKU; Master of Arts in Curriculum, (specialized in Technology) from Phoenix Arizona; and just completed a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership K-12 at Eastern Kentucky University with a 4.0 GPA.



Each of these three teachers has displayed a dedicated attitude in her chosen career by applying hard work and dedication in meeting program assessment standards. Their combined attention to detail, through documentation, has unequivocally provided a standard of excellence – one that they can be proud of and that each has achieved. And, they now have the documentation to prove what transpired throughout the school year.



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